

THE WEATHERVANE

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STAYING ALIVE: SMOKING ISN'T COOL ANY MORE. CANCER DEATHS DECREASE.

More good medical news for 2019 came from the American Cancer Society. Driven mostly by the drop in smoker's deaths, an estimated 2.6 million fewer people died in the past 25 years according to the American Cancer Society. For most of the last century cancer fatalities rose gradually until a peak in 1991 when efforts to reduce smoking began to take effect. Since that date the death rate has dropped 1.5% each year through 2016. Added to the decrease in tobacco consumption, are the improved methods of cancer detection to apply remedies earlier in the disease. Still this reduction does not mean cancer deaths are nearing zero. Some improvement yes, but cancer remains one of the leading causes of death for Americans.

TAKE IT WITH A GRAIN OF SALT, BUT WATCH YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE.

Specialists in food science and food microbiology have spent years in research determining what is and what is not safe for human consumption. Along the way they have exploded some myths. For example; the five second rule: people want to believe that a piece of food dropped to the floor is safe to eat if you pick it up quickly enough. Five seconds is plenty of time for nasty bacteria to leap onto a piece of your lunch, or a cookie fragment. In the lab at Clemson University after dropping bologna and bread on a surface contaminated with salmonella, technicians recovered between 100,000 and 10,000,000 bacteria after five seconds. True, letting the sample sit for 60 seconds was about 10 times worse, but five seconds was bad enough. Another popular fallacy relates to ice cubes; they are believed not to carry bacteria, but the Journal of Food Research found that 60% to 80% of ice scoops carried E.coli that was easily introduced to drinks. Lemon slices in drinks are thought to produce acid that reduces harmful bacteria. A study published in Journal of Environmental Health found that 70% of lemon slices taken from the rim of glasses in restaurants carried up to 25 different microbial species. Eat and drink at your own risk, but be wise and careful.

WOMEN DON'T BELONG IN COMBAT UNITS.

The Obama administration policy of integrating women into ground fighting units is a misguided social experiment. The next defense secretary should quickly dump it. Recently, the Marine Corps released a study comparing the performance of gender integrated and male-only infantry units in simulated combat. It was no surprise that the male-only units greatly outperformed the integrated teams in shooting, surmounting obstacles, evacuating casualties. The female Marines were injured at more than six times the rate of men. It follows since male hormones produce stronger bones and muscles. These were the fittest females and had to work at full capacity to carry 80 lb. packs, climb 20 foot ropes multiple times, and scale an 8 foot barrier. The purpose of the test is to ensure that officers can hump their own equipment, and still arrive at a battleground mentally and physically able to command troops. Because most female applicants failed the test, it was redefined from pass/fail requirement to an unscored exercise with no bearing on the candidate's ultimate evaluation. Moreover, the 10 mile hike has been altered "gender neutral" so that officers can hand their pack to a buddy if they get tired. Another effect that has become taboo to talk about is the inevitable introduction of Eros.

Putting young hormonally charged men and women into stressful close quarters often for extended periods invites sexual liaisons, rivalries, breakups that undermine the bonding necessary to a fighting force. This combination of effects seriously reduces the American military's lethality. The incoming Pentagon chief will get aggressive grilling on gender integration from the Senate Armed Services Committee. He must resolve the absurd claim that when it comes to combat there are no significant physical differences.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE DISCOUNTED PURCHASE DON'T DELAY.

President Trump's top economic adviser said the administration is looking to eliminate subsidies and other benefits that go with electric cars. This move could seriously hamper the auto industry's push to broaden the market for battery-operated vehicles. Lawrence Kudlow, the President's top financial analyst said, "As a matter of policy we want to end all these subsidies imposed during the Obama administration. We are a free market." Specifically the president was referring to an Obama-era stimulus that created a \$7500 consumer tax credit for the purchase of luxury electric cars. Nice work if you can afford a Tesla.

FIRST CHECK OUT THE TERRITORY.

In Brisbane, Australia, a woman at first thought she was bitten on her bottom by a frog. She said she did not turn on the lights before she began her nocturnal bathroom task. "I felt this sharp tap on my bottom along with some pain." The tap was from a 5-foot long python hanging outside her toilet. She pulled up her knickers, shut the toilet lid on the invader and called the professional snake handlers. Her bum has recovered and her sense of humor is intact. In the future, she will not fail to turn on the light before doing her business.

LYING PRONE ON THE HIGHWAY IS NEVER A GOOD IDEA.

In West Palm Beach, Florida, two 24-year-olds chose to view the January 20, 2019, eclipse rare super blood wolf moon by lying prone in the middle of a dark road. All seemed to be going well until around 11:30 P.M. a West Palm Beach police officer patrolling the area ran over the pair. He was cruising at just 5 mph and the human speed bumps sustained only non-life-threatening injuries.

ADDENDA

- The first person killed by train was run over during the opening ceremony of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in England, September 15, 1830.
- Princeton professor John W. Tukey coined the term "software" in 1958.
- My grandmother's brain was dead, but her heart was still beating. It was the first time we ever had a Democrat in the family.
- It's more fun contemplating someone else's navel than your own.
- I've known what it is to be hungry, but I always went right to a restaurant.
- Churches welcome all denominations, but most prefer tens and twenties.

ALOHA AND KEEP THE FAITH **rts**

(Editorial comment is strictly that of the writer.)